

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

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USIA-15 OMB-01 /071 W

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R 010730Z AUG 77

FM AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3237

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USAREUR HEIDELBERG

USAFE RAMSTEIN

USCINCEUR STUTTGART

UNCLAS DUSSELDORF 1284

MILITARY ADDEES FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: KUEHN'S SUCCESSION AND THE NRW COALITION

1. SUMMARY: NRW MINISTERPRESIDENT HAS AGAIN SHUFFLED THE LOTTERY TICKETS FOR HIS EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT AND DRAWN OUT NRW SCIENCE MINISTER RAU AS HIS FIRST CHOICE. A PUBLISHED INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE ALSO STATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO STEP DOWN IN EARLY 1979 IN FAVOR OF RAU HAS DRAWN SHARP CRITICISM FROM OTHER HOPEFULS AND AN EMBARRASSED DISCLAIMER BY RAU OF ANY COMPLICITY IN THE KUEHN PLAN. ONE UNEXPECTED RESULT HAS BEEN A FIRM STATEMENT BY THE HEAD OF THE NRW/FDP THAT HIS PARTY WOULD REMAIN IN THE COALITION UNTIL THE

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1980 LANDTAG ELECTIONS, REGARDLESS OF POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE SPD LEADERSHIP OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER HE WOULD PREFER KUEHN TO STAY IN OFFICE FOR THE FULL TERM. END SUMMARY.

2. IN AN INTERVIEW ON JULY 22, HEINZ KUEHN (SPD), MINISTERPRESIDENT OF NORTHRHINE-WESTPHALIA (NRW)

INDICATED THAT HE MIGHT RELINQUISH HIS OFFICE PRIOR TO THE EXPIRATION OF HIS TERM IN 1980. AT THE SAME TIME KUEHN RECOMMENDED JOHANNES RAU, NRW MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND RESEARCH AS HIS SUCCESSOR. KUEHN ALSO REVEALED PLANS TO RUN FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, WHICH WOULD SUIT HIS INCLINATIONS TO LOOK AND TRAVEL BEYOND THE BORDERS OF NRW. AS A POSSIBLE RETIREMENT DATE KUEHN MENTIONED THE SPRING OF 1979.

3. KUEHN'S INTERVIEW DREW SHARP REACTIONS FROM HIS OWN PARTY. NRW MINISTER OF JUSTICE DR. DIETHER POSSER REASSERTED HIS CLAIM TO THE CANDIDACY AND NRW MINISTER OF LABOR, FARTHMAN, ALSO A CANDIDATE, WARNED AGAINST A PREMATURE PERSONNEL DISCUSSION. HERMANN HEINEMANN, CHAIRMAN OF THE POWERFUL WESTERN WESTPHALIA SPD DISTRICT WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF KUEHN FOR HAVING UNNECESSARILY REKINDLED THIS DEBATE.

4. NRW/FDP CHAIRMAN AND MINISTER OF ECONOMICS DR. HORST-LUDWIG RIEMER DECLARED THAT HIS PARTY WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH INTERNAL MATTERS OF THE COALITION PARTNER, BUT HE TOO CONSIDERED THE DISCUSSION PREMATURE. HOWEVER HE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD PREFER TO SEE KUEHN SERVE OUT HIS FULL TERM. HE ADDED ASSURANCES THAT THE COALITION WOULD BE CONTINUED UNTIL 1980 WITH OR WITHOUT KUEHN. BOTH RAU AND POSSER WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE
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TO THE FDP. FARTHMAN IS NOT ELIGIBLE UNTIL THE NEXT LANDTAG ELECTIONS BECAUSE THE MINISTERPRESIDENT MUST BE A LANDTAG DEPUTY WHICH FARTHMAN IS NOT.

5. COMMENT: CONTRARY TO SOME EARLIER SPECULATIONS, RIEMER'S PLEDGE SUGGESTS THAT THE SPD/FDP COALITION IN NRW IS SECURE UNTIL 1980 EVEN IF KUEHN SHOULD RESIGN EARLIER, AND THAT THE HANNOVER EXPERIENCE WILL NOT BE REPEATED HERE.DUX

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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